

DEAR COLLEAGUES: SOME OF US ON THE FACULTY WERE GIVEN THIS DOCUMENT BY A FRIEND AMONG THE HIGHER-UPS. WE THOUGHT IT SHOULD BE REPRODUCED AND DISTRIBUTED. IS THIS WHAT THEY HAVE IN STORE FOR US? WE NEED TO KNOW MORE!

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To: Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller

From: Newt Davidson, Special Assistant to the Chancellor,
City University of New York (CUNY)

Subject: The BHE-PSC Contract and Long-Range Planning for CUNY

Date: September 12, 1973

You will be pleased to learn that the PSC Delegate Assembly has just recommended ratification of the new contract by a vote of 55 to 32. I am assured that this will be accomplished without significant opposition, and it is not therefore premature for all of us on the Higher Education Policy Council to congratulate ourselves on the completion of a vital phase of our ongoing program. A full report on the contract will soon be distributed to HEP Council members, placing it in the context of our ultimate objectives. Allow me to summarize the major points.

As stated in the HEP Report for 1961 (pp. 3-6), and later reaffirmed at the Poconos Conference of July 1970, we must bring the operation of CUNY up to modern, businesslike standards of efficiency and accountability. Our main obstacle to date has been the CUNY faculty, who defend their traditional and outmoded prerogatives with the rhetoric of "quality education" and an emphasis upon non-productive "liberal arts" curricula. We are agreed, however, that arguing with such an articulate segment of the community would be counterproductive. Our aim, therefore, has been to encourage faculty preoccupation with "bread and butter" issues, while at the same time restructuring the teaching staff from within.

The new contract is an important step forward on both counts. First, while holding the line on increases to the full-time faculty, it effectively reduces adjunct salaries by slashing benefits and keeping their increases well below the mounting cost of living. Since the 6000 adjuncts now constitute some 40% of the CUNY faculty, this will not only achieve considerable economies, but it will also create an atmosphere of tension between the full-time and part-time teaching staff.

Second, the new contract eliminates multiple positions for the adjuncts, frees us from the strait-jacket of preferential hiring, and cleans away cumbersome grievance procedures. As a result, we will be able to move rapidly toward our goal of increasing the proportion of adjuncts on the teaching staff, cutting

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sharply back on the middle ranks of full-time faculty, and phasing out many of the currently excessive number of senior faculty. Ultimately, as outlined in the HEP Report for 1968 ("Labor and Management in Higher Education"), we hope to create a teaching force for CUNY composed largely of adjuncts and therefore inexpensive, expendable, and flexible enough to meet the changing needs of the city economy. PSC consent to the "zipper clause" in the new contract opens the way for removal of the myriad traditional and customary rights (such as the election of departmental chairmen) that impede efficient management.

As the number and entrenched power of the full-time faculty diminish, we will be in a position to discard the archaic tenure system itself, which is both costly and a continuing barrier to the removal of faculty deadwood.

It also seems advisable to reiterate the need for student evaluations of faculty performance, since the inevitable faculty opposition will further discredit them with their students and increase pressures for modernization of the entire CUNY system.

The next phase of our HEP Council program is a complete transformation of the instructional process through the use of educational technology. The 1972 Master Plan for CUNY calls for the massive expansion of the CUMBIN (City University Mutual Benefit Instructional Network) project, established in 1967, and already in operation at the Graduate Center as well as five senior colleges (City, Queens, Brooklyn, Hunter, and Lehman). Through closed-circuit television, the CUMBIN system will enable us to use our instructional staffs at all colleges with optimal efficiency.

One pole of the new system will be a small but eminent staff at the Graduate Center. These scholars will be able to transmit lectures, via the CUMBIN microwave relay, to all twenty campuses simultaneously. At one or more terminal points on each campus, 500 to 700 students may be conveniently assembled to view the broadcast. Thus, one top-flight American historian at the Center who costs us, say, \$35,000 per year will be able to replace at least twenty full-time faculty in the same field at the individual colleges whose combined salaries now cost us between \$300,000 and \$400,000 per year. In time, we anticipate that this arrangement will enable us to operate with a full-time teaching force at least one-twentieth its present size, while at the same time maintaining the highest academic standards through the elimination of mediocrity and incompetence in the individual colleges.

The second pole of the system will be a flexible teaching force consisting of rotating teams of adjuncts who will supervise recitation sections of 100-200 students at the CUMBIN terminal points, thus assuring effective student-teacher contact on each campus. There is no reason to fear a decline in academic standards since the adjuncts will include in their ranks many who formerly occupied higher positions on the faculty. Then, too, recent HEP Council surveys of the labor market confirm that--even at the

projected, minimal salary scale--we will be able to attract the best A.B.D.'s and new Ph.D.'s from area universities far into the foreseeable future.

Needless to say, the centralization of the learning process via CUMBIN will allow us to monitor more effectively the content of the instructional program, to remove the influence of cranks and subversives upon the student population, and, finally, to impress more effectively upon our young people those values and habits of mind needed for success in our highly-organized contemporary society. Mr. Freund's office will for the moment be financed quietly out of the special Chancellor's fund in order to avoid arousing the opposition of faculty traditionalists.

Although the new contract thus brings us closer to the day when the CUNY faculty can be utilized flexibly, in accordance with modern cost-effectiveness standards, our ability to respond quickly and affirmatively to changes in the city's economic picture will depend upon an equally flexible approach to the size and training of the student body. Our business and industrial leaders have long understood that the traditional liberal arts curriculum, which turns out young men and women poorly prepared for and often critical of the tasks demanded of them by a free society and economy, is an inappropriate as well as counter-productive drain upon public resources. New York City in particular is dependent upon its reserves of skilled and semi-skilled white collar workers, not upon poets and historians. Thus, as outlined in the very first HEP Report (1948), our game-plan must include the following:

- a) We must gradually de-emphasize so-called "liberal arts" instructional programs, which merely encourage our young people to aspire to unreasonable and unrealizable career-options. As the Cottrell Report (1950) emphasized, it is "unquestionable that there must always be 'drawers of water and hewers of wood'. ...It is a mistake to assume that all who take some form of higher education should expect a professional or highly technical position. This is an Old World, leisure-class tradition. It has no real basis in our American democratic way of life."
- b) We must channel students into those instructional programs geared to the training of bank clerks, hospital and laboratory technicians, secretaries, key-punch operators, draftsmen, and the many other less glamorous occupations so vital to the business community.
- c) We must assure that the overall instructional process instills in our city's youth a healthy respect toward the work for which they are being prepared, the correct attitudes to do it properly, and a suitable sense of gratitude for those who have given them the opportunity to lead useful lives.
- d) We must make greater efforts to reach the disadvantaged Black and Puerto Rican youth of our community, who, through CUNY, can be trained for work in the city's offices and industries commensurate with their abilities, be made more aware of the requirements for cooperative citizenship, and be prepared to become responsible leaders of their communities upon their return. Frankly, our failure to move fast enough on this front contributed much to the atmosphere of racial extremism in the 1960's. Since then, however, we have stepped up the expansion of community colleges into disadvantaged neighborhoods, launched the Open Admissions program far ahead

of schedule, and expanded our plans for direct-action programs, of which the Cool in Summer program is a case in point. These measures, thanks to the generous cooperation of law-enforcement and welfare officials, have already done much to stem the tide of racial discontent.

e) We must achieve a higher capability for expanding or contracting the size of our student body in response to inputs from the economic sector, without also interfering with our objectives as outlined in points (c) and (d) above. We remain committed to the Keppel Commission's recommendation that this goal can be most effectively attained through the simultaneous abolition of free tuition and the creation of a massive scholar-incentive program. The number of these scholarships would be increased as the economy expands, and diminished as the economy declines. The work-study monies, geared to the white, lower-income students, would be similarly increased and diminished. At present, the need for retrenchment is paramount. (As the Keppel Commission noted: "The State's projected supply of college-educated citizens appears to exceed the economy's projected demand for those who complete the baccalaureate degree and for many graduate degrees as well. The demand appears to be greater for students at the two-year, technical and occupational level.") Even now, we are abolishing the costly SEEK program and slashing work-study programs.

f) We must not lose sight of the important role that our rental and construction programs can play in advancing our overall objectives. The allocation of contracts can, in itself, do much to engage the support of influential union, business, and real-estate industry leaders who might otherwise remain indifferent or even hostile to our program. Furthermore, the massive influx of rental and construction money into disadvantaged neighborhoods can revive sagging real-estate values, pump new life into small businesses, strengthen the middle-income groups whose presence is so vital to community stability, and, in general, brighten the darkening environment in which so many of our city's youth acquire undesirable values and habits.

g) Finally, we must acknowledge that in the past, decisions affecting higher education in the State have not always been reached in a sufficiently orderly and prudent manner. Ad hoc solutions to specific problems have been made without adequate regard to an overall pattern of development. These relationships need to be revised for the sake of the students, post-secondary education, and the State. Now, with passage of our Omnibus Higher Education Act, we have moved closer to the day when all post-secondary education, public and private, can be centrally coordinated and supervised by the Office of the Governor. With ratification of the new BHE-PSC contract, we will achieve an important preliminary streamlining of governance, planning, and coordination at the local level, eliminating wasteful duplication.

In so far as it has contributed to weakening, distracting, and dividing the faculty, the new contract has significantly reduced the likelihood that there will be any foot-dragging within CUNY itself as our modernization program advances. It is essential, however, that we avoid potentially unfavorable media commentary by adhering to our low-profile policy, and all HEP Council members have received copies of the attached memo, instructing them to refrain from public discussion of the contract and/or long-range planning for CUNY.